

Quick Tip of the Week

Did you know . . .

A **thesis statement** is the most important sentence in an essay. Not only does it tell your readers the main idea of your essay, it is also a map of where you plan to take them. The easiest way for me to discuss this vital part of your work is to relate it something simple we have all done...drive a car or ride a bus. That's right!



So, the writer needs to think of himself as a bus driver. It is up to him to decide what path he will take to get to the final destination and the speed at which he will get there. The passengers are your readers, and your thesis statement is the bus route you have promised to take them on. Now, if your bus route tells your passengers that you will visit Juniper Hall, the Red Bud Learning Center and the Cypress College Center, imagine the confusion your readers will feel when they get off the bus in the parking lot at Sea World!



Your readers must trust you, and taking them where you have promised to take them is very important. Remember, that as a writer you control all of the information your readers will see, what sequence they get it in, and the direction it takes. So if your thesis statement claims it will discuss certain issues or explain a statement, than be sure to do so! Don't tell your reader they are going to the Red Bud Learning Center and then take them to Sea World instead. Once you lose the trust of a reader they won't believe anything else you are telling them, no matter how academic you make it sound.

So how can you be sure your thesis statement is the right match for your essay? . . .

One easy way to make sure your thesis statement matches the flow of your essay is to look at your rough draft and single out each body paragraph. As you look at the first body paragraph, read through it and write a one-to-three word summary of the information it contains. Do the same for the second and third body paragraphs. Now look at your thesis and compare it to those summaries. Did your paragraphs explore the ideas mapped out in your thesis? (Did you go to Juniper Hall, Red Bud and Cypress Center?) Did it also cover the material in the same order you had planned for? If you can answer yes to both of these questions than you have a good thesis statement. If you answered no to any of these questions then you need to revise your work.

Finally, take a look at the conclusion. Read it and also write a brief summary of its topic. Does it reinforce the claim you made in your thesis? If it doesn't, than revise accordingly, but if it does than great job! Your thesis statement is complete and works well with the rest of your essay.

"Contracts? Intent? Discussion? Where Do I Begin?" by Ron Sandvik